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Bianca Gerente

Universidade Católica de Moçambique

bgerente@ucm.ac.mz

Ilidia Cabral

Universidade Católica Portuguesa

icabral@porto.ucp.pt

Ways of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Representations in the panorama of law education at the Catholic University of Mozambique

Os Modos de Ensinar e Aprender no Ensino Superior: Representações no panorama da formação em Direito na Universidade Católica de Moçambique

Abstract

Given the current demands in higher education that emphasize the need to change teaching and learning strategies, it is necessary to understand what is being done by teachers and students in a scenario that impels the progressive empowerment of student work and confronts teachers with the challenge of promoting in those skills, as well as techniques. Student success or failure is closely related to the organization of teaching institutions and the way teachers teach. This article aims to understand the representations that encompass the professors and students of the law course of the Catholic University of Mozambique (UCM) and their influence on how to teach, learn and evaluate this course. Methodologically it is a case study, of interpretative nature, being inserted in a research of eminently qualitative character. A questionnaire survey was applied to 153 students attending the third and fourth years of law school, in three of the faculties of UCM (Faculty of Tourism and Informatics Management, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences and Faculty of Law respectively). In addition, 23 teachers who teach subjects on this course also participated in the survey. A documentary analysis of the curricular program of the course and literature review were also undertaken. The study results indicate that UCM law teachers and students understand the teaching, learning and assessment process of this course from a different perspective. Teachers conceive of teaching as the transmission of knowledge. Their main challenges are: pedagogical training, research and student assessment. In turn, students believe that in order to develop their learning, teachers should interact more with students, investigate more and use advanced teaching methods, that is that teachers should appropriate the logic of teacher-student interaction.

Keywords: Teacher, students, teaching-learning, law.

Resumo

Diante das exigências actuais no Ensino Superior que acentuam a necessidade de alterar as estratégias do ensino e da aprendizagem, é preciso compreender o que está a ser feito pelos professores e pelos estudantes num cenário que impele à progressiva autonomização do trabalho do estudante e que coloca os professores mediante o desafio de promover naqueles, competências não só técnicas. O sucesso ou insucesso dos estudantes encontra-se intimamente relacionado com a organização das instituições de ensino e com o modo de ensinar dos professores. Este artigo pretende compreender as representações que englobam os professores e os estudantes do curso superior de Direito da Universidade Católica de Moçambique (UCM) e a sua influência na forma de ensinar, aprender e avaliar este curso. Metodologicamente é um estudo de caso, de natureza interpretativa, inserindo-se numa pesquisa de carácter eminentemente qualitativa. Recorreu-se à aplicação de um inquérito por questionário a 153 estudantes que frequentam o terceiro e quartos anos do curso de Direito, em três das Faculdades da UCM (Faculdade de Gestão de Turismo e Informática, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Políticas e Faculdade de Direito respectivamente). De igual modo, inquiriram-se 23 professores dessas Faculdades que leccionam disciplinas ao nível deste curso. Procedeu-se, ainda, à análise documental do programa curricular do curso e revisão da literatura. Os resultados do estudo indicam que os professores e estudantes do curso de Direito da UCM compreendem o processo de ensino, aprendizagem e avaliação deste curso numa perspetiva diferente. Os professores, concebem o ensino como transmissão de conhecimentos. Os seus principais desafios são: a formação pedagógica, a investigação e a avaliação do estudante, por sua vez, os estudantes acreditam que, para desenvolver a sua aprendizagem, os professores deveriam interagir mais com os estudantes, investigar mais e utilizar métodos de ensino avançados, isto é, apropriando-se da lógica interativa professor-aluno.

Palavras-chave: Professor, estudantes, ensino-aprendizagem, direito.



Rua: Comandante Gaivão nº 688

C.P.: 821

Website: <http://www.ucm.ac.mz/cms/>Revista: <http://www.reid.ucm.ac.mz>Email: reid@ucm.ac.mz

Tel.: (+258) 23 324 809

Fax: (+258) 23 324 858

Beira, Moçambique

Introduction

The importance of higher education in the development of a country is unquestionable, because the greater the education of the citizen, the greater the capacity to contribute to its growth and to the improvement of the living conditions of others.

Within this perspective, Mozambique has focused on education as one of the main development strategies in the fight against absolute poverty. Because of this, there has been a growth in the number of higher education institutions and an increase in training provision. However, higher education institutions in the country have been widely criticized as regards the quality of the education provided to their students as well as the teachers who accompany them. In addition to the difficulties faced by the recent graduate in the process of their training, they are manifesting a low degree of confidence in their absorption into the labor market (Langa, 2014; Laíta, 2015; Mazula, 2010; Noa, 2011).

If, on the one hand, changes from the point of view of Mozambican education policy lead to advances in the general indicators of development, on the other hand, there is doubt as to how the educational policy adopted corresponds with the real needs of society itself.

This debate on education in the context of education policy, the management models inherent in educational institutions and the practical field of teacher education at higher education level is much more heated given the expected level of demand for their responsibilities and specifications. (Langa, 2014). Therefore, there is a need to change the almost widespread perception that teaching in Mozambique scarcely meets the real needs of the population, particularly at the level of processes that effectively lead to meaningful learning by students.

Therefore, the Catholic University of Mozambique (UCM) has, over the past 20 years, placed a considerable number of lawyers in the labor market, some of whom have entered the judiciary.

As a researcher, I am interested in analyzing how this training is currently being administered, mainly due to the fact that this degree and course educates academics and professionals in a complex and diverse field of knowledge that responds to a practical interest arising from the adjustment of a variety of profiles to a significant number of job opportunities, as well as to a relationship with the diverse work sectors.

As is the case in most national universities offering a degree in this area, the law curriculum in the three cycles has been remodeled in order to keep up with emerging curriculum requirements and the needs of the labour market itself. These remodelings come from the need to adapt to the dynamics of society itself. However, there is a concern that adjustments will be based on education systems in other countries, that prove to be inappropriate to the Mozambican reality.

In addition to these concerns, there is also the fact that a significant part of the specialists currently working in the faculty demonstrate limited psycho-pedagogical skills, even though they have been undergoing training in the same. It is equally urgent to try to understand how the law teachers teach, assess learning and how their students learn.

Within this context, we present the main research question as: What are the mental representations of professors and students of the UCM Law course regarding its teaching and learning process? To this are added three further questions: a) What mental representations do teachers and students present about the ways of teaching? b) What mental representations do teachers and students present about learning? c) What mental representations do teachers and students present about ways of assessing?

The original dissertation, undertaken as part of a doctoral thesis, which gives rise to this article is structured in four parts, with an in-depth conceptual and theoretical framework on the themes that are linked to the problem of this study, namely: a) the Bolonha process in Mozambican higher education; b) models and practices of teaching and learning in higher education; c) didactics in higher education; d) curriculum design and development in higher education.

Methodology

This research starts from the formulation of a research problem that relates to the ways of teaching and learning in higher education, specifically in law degree courses at the Catholic University of Mozambique. It aims at understanding this object in order to contribute to the reflections arising from the debate on learning in higher education.

We present a case study of an interpretative nature and which is part of an eminently qualitative research, since it is intended to understand and interpret the concepts and ideas on ways of teaching and learning in higher education, specifically at the University Catholic of Mozambique (Flick, 2009; Sampieri, Collado & Lúcio, 2006; Quivy, & Campenhoudt, 2008).

The technique chosen for data collection in this study was the questionnaire survey, adapted from the study by Borralho, Fialho, Cid, Alves and Morgado (2014). The questionnaire has three principal sections: a) teaching; b) learning; c) evaluation. In each section there are 15 open-ended Likert-type questions, according to Quivy & Campenhoudt (2008).

The participants for this study were selected from third and fourth year teachers and students of the law degree course at three of the Faculties of the Catholic University of Mozambique that teach the course, namely: Faculty of Law (FADIR), Faculty of Management Tourism and

Informatics (FGTI), and the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences (FCPS). In terms of representativeness, we opted for a convenience sample, according to Sampieri, Collado & Lúcio (2006).

Three conditions formed the criteria for the selections of sites and study participants, namely: a) geographical site location and costs; b) participants had to belong to one of the three selected Faculties of the Catholic University of Mozambique that offer the degree in law, either as a full-time teacher or as a student attending the 3rd or 4th year of the course (the 4th year students, by having studied up until completion of their course have a more consistent opinion to offer which corresponds with the purposes of the inquiry); c) availability and/or willingness of the student and or teacher to participate in the study.

The questionnaire applied met the same criteria in terms of structure (Teaching, Learning and Assessment). Table 1, immediately below, describes the characteristics of all the participants' involved in the study.

Table 1: Number of participants by faculty

FACULTIES	TEACHERS			STUDENTS		
	No. of teachers who teach full-time in the 3rd and 4th years of the law	Teachers surveyed		Total number of students studying in the 3rd and 4th year of the law	Students surveyed	
		Nº of teachers	% In relation to total number of teachers		Nº of students	% IN relation to total number of students
FADIR	14	10	71.4%	123	101	82.1%
FGTI	8	8	100%	13	8	61.5%
FCSP	5	5	100%	67	47	70.1%
TOTAL	27	23	-	203	153	-

Source: Author

In order to better match the triangulation parameters, an analysis was made of the following documents: UCM General Regulations, UCM Scientific Policy, UCM Law Degree Curriculum Plan, and Law 27/2009 of 29 September, Higher Education Law of Mozambique.

The data from the written documents and the open answers of the questionnaire were subjected to content analysis and were grouped by categories, subcategories and indicators, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Categories, subcategories e data sources

CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES	DATA SOURCE
<i>CATEGORY A:</i> Teaching methods used in the law course at UCM	a) Knowledge of subject content b) Teaching methods used by teachers Organization of lessons	Questionnaires applied to teachers and students Law course curriculum
<i>CATEGORY B:</i> Learning methods used in the law course at UCM	a) Learning of subject content b) Learning development c) Support given by teachers	Questionnaires applied to teachers and students Law course curriculum
<i>CATEGORY C:</i> Evaluation methods used in the law course at UCM	a) Types of evaluation b) Student participation in the evaluation process c) Evaluation criteria d) Evaluation results	Questionnaires applied to teachers and students Law course curriculum
<i>CATEGORY D:</i> The challenges faced by teachers of the law course at UCM	a) Challenges faced by teachers in the teaching and learning process	Questionnaires applied to teachers
<i>CATEGORY E:</i> Suggestions for the improvement of learning for the law course UCM	b) What do teachers have to do to ensure the at students learn more/better c) What do students have to do to learn more/better?	Questionnaires applied to students

Source: Author

Data from the questionnaires were entered and processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 22, and we also used Microsoft Excel software for data tabulation. The registration units for each participant are referred to as “P”. These tools allowed the descriptive analysis (between relative and absolute frequencies) for each faculty.

Presentation and discussion of Results

The Catholic University of Mozambique strives for the harmonization of its courses so that the syllabus implemented in all the faculties are the same thereby ensuring the mobility and automatic accreditation of students, as provided for in the Bologna Process.

The Faculty of Law is responsible for reviewing, supervising and monitoring this course at the other UCM faculties that teach this course. The curriculum of the law course has undergone many changes over the last 20 years, currently having a duration of 4 years and a classroom education system. The presentation and discussion of the results is divided between: teaching, learning and evaluation.

Teacher and Student Representations on Teaching Methods

The guidelines on teaching, learning and assessment in the law course are set by the Curriculum Plan of the law degree course of the Catholic University of Mozambique. These guidelines, of course, arise from the need to distribute all annual subjects and their corresponding credits by

semesters, as well as to present the contents of each subject, the form of assessment, the basic bibliography, among other key elements for the certification of the teaching-learning, according to the General Regulations of this University. Thus, we seek to present an analysis of teaching methods used, and the answers given are tied to, in general, a rich perception in demonstrations of the concept of knowledge transition and teaching in the university.

Firstly, this study found that teachers practice the act of informing students at the beginning of each unit of study about contents that will be taught and the objectives to be achieved (among other elements, are the bibliographic references, dates and methods of evaluation).

“Teachers present their subject program to students as a way for students to easily integrate into the subject, so [they] will already know what it will be given in each lesson” (P137).

The meaning and intent of this practice, as evidenced, is based on the idea that the monitoring of learning is valued and its evolution towards the objectives is set within the program. On the other hand, the teacher should explain to the students the objectives of the course, which methodologies will be used throughout the semester, in order to create an opening for the possible adaptation of the subjects to the social context of the students. However, as (Anastácio, 2001; Assis, 2012; Basil, 2010; Bolfer, 2008; Borralho, Fialho & Cid, 2009) argue, one cannot perceive the sharing of the curriculum as a simple act of revealing what will be given to the student throughout the semester. This perception is commonly shared by the respondents.

"Teachers must not only engage in complying with the established program, but must also make students understand what is being transmitted and assess whether what is actually transmitted is understood." (P.125)

“The teachers provide the plans and the syllabus for [the] next class and we students go in search of the subject and each one of us has a certain concept about the same subject due to the variation [sic] of the works and authors, and we present to the teacher but the teacher is unable to advise us on what the position or concept is, he is more certain of what we get and it is difficult to know if he is fulfilling his role as advisor or not”. (P.4)

In reality, the UCM General Regulations allow teachers to exercise autonomy over the operationalization of the syllabus so that they may include those subjects that they consider relevant for the development of student learning, as long as they safeguard of the main corpus of the curriculum program.

At the faculties where the surveys were conducted, it was noted that students had an awareness of how teachers teach given that they were informed of the contents of each curricular unit. This allowed them to reflect on the techniques used for learning.

“Teachers have been at height [sic] to transmit knowledge and have developed effort and performance to encourage the student.” (P.114).

“Teachers may be knowledgeable about the subject, but they sometimes fail to transmit in a way that students understand.” (P.118).

Regarding the methods, the teacher diversifies so that he easily transmits the knowledge (P.130).

“There are teachers who make a great effort to transmit knowledge effectively. Teachers should vary the teaching method even more to better convey knowledge.” (P.47)

“Teachers must pass on their knowledge based on a spirit of pedagogy.” (P.88)

The analysis made by the students brings us to the traditional definition of the teaching method, that is, to the simple transmission of knowledge (Roldão, 2007). The lecture method is prevalent in this course, as most teachers and students agree that classes develop better with teachers by exposing program content while students listen and take notes. The single use of this method has several implications. The authors (Marcheti, 2001; Nérici, 1981; Godoy, 2000), state that this method only promotes the passivity of the student, translating into an absence of a critical and participatory spirit, so important for the exercise of the profession. Therefore, the excessive use of this method, according to Paviane and Paviane (2014), may be associated with factors such as: a) conception of teaching as a simple transmission of knowledge; b) teachers' lack of knowledge about teaching methods; c) preparation and/or availability of time to prepare classes; weak mastery of didactics. These factors were mentioned by the interviewed students, as well as in part by the teachers.

“The lack of pedagogical training (p5); benefit of continuing education.” (P.4);

“Mastery of teaching methods” (P.11)

“Not all teachers are fully knowledgeable about the content of the subjects they teach. This requires that they first prepare classes and seek support in order to improve teaching.” (P.143)

“Create teaching methods that oblige the student to have a spirit of inquiry.” (P.22);

“There are teachers who do not master the subject they teach.” (P.55)

“The Faculty should bring in teachers who master the area for which they are responsible for teaching.” (P.91)

“Teachers are dedicated, although one or two who do not master the subject.” (P.5)

“Have students with a level of knowledge that responds to university challenges.” (P.19)

“Ensure proper transmission of subjects to students.” (P.17)

“Make learning, whatever the subject, useful and related to local people and communities.” (P.11)

The fact that, at the faculties, the teachers of the law course do not possess the professional category of Professor is one of the negative consequences that feeds this phenomenon. However, according to Paviani and Paviani (2014), if teachers conceive that their role is to transmit knowledge to students, they are simultaneously nullifying the possibilities for them to

be able to develop their learning independently through research and reflection on the subjects proposed by the teachers. For the authors (Godoy, 2000; Marcheti, 2001), the expository method, when properly understood, serves as mechanisms for meaningful learning. Jesus (2008), Lopes (2012), Nerici (1981) and Ramos, et. al. (2013) state that the diversity of existing methods confirms the possibility that teachers can develop students' learning when confronted with the different situations they may encounter inside and outside the classroom. However, according to Roldão (2007), the understanding of the role of both teacher and student in the teaching process is evidently relevant.

The cognitive approach that the University favors is essentially centered on learning, as opposed to the “oppressive pedagogy” referred to by Freire (2014). The normative documents, quality assessment supports and incentives in the various fields offered by the University, stimulate the need and desire for professional growth of the teacher. In this sense, the teachers interviewed showed that they were aware of the importance played by the challenge of improving their didactic and pedagogical action.

“The efficient transmission of materials.” (P.15)

“Achieve better method of knowledge transmission.” (P.15)

“Ensure proper transmission of subjects to students.” (P.17)

“Make students feel that university is a different reality than secondary school and instill that reality in their minds.” (P.17)

On this basis, students and teachers demonstrate a divergent understanding of the essence of what teaching is. Misunderstanding of the teacher's role influences academic outcomes. According to Roldão (2005 cit. In Roldão, 2007, p.95), the teacher's role translates into the task of “the teaching of something (what we call curriculum) so that someone may learn (the act of teaching is only fulfilled when the second part of act, the learning, occurs in the recipient of the action, otherwise the alleged action of teaching is non-existent or gratuitous)”. However, once teachers understand their role, they can better support students in developing their learning and thus play an active role in the teaching and learning process (Stedile, 2009). As much as the teacher must master his role in the teaching-learning process, the student must take responsibility for himself as part of the process.

Student-centered teaching, provided for by the Bologna Process and brought in as a central element of educational practices at this University, necessarily implies, in addition to a uniform architecture of specialization, accreditation and mobility, changes in educational characteristics (Laíta, 2015). Student-centered teaching, according to Ramos, et al. (2013), gives the teacher the

guiding role in the teaching and learning process, and it is his responsibility to promote student learning through a variety of methods. The trends of the answers in the questionnaires show the need to highlight practices in favor of the real meaning of learning-centered teaching.

In theory, the curriculum plan emphasizes that there should be given: a) theoretical classes, which highlight concepts that allow the understanding of relevant and important topics for the execution of their professional activities; b) seminars that allow the student to analyze, use information, argue and present ideas, formulate problems and solutions; c) practical activities in “community courts” and “IPAJ” internships in public institutions that allow the student to try the activities, complement and apply the theoretical bases they have been taught and ; c) student involvement in research, study and problem solving activities and production practices. In practice, students indicate a desire for much of these practical activities.

“Much research, the student cannot be limited by the teacher's explanation.” (P.99);

“Further research, exchanges of experience as we are law students each month [one should] organize a mock trial.” (P.84)

“Internships to acquire more knowledge beyond what is learned in the classroom, can also interact with teachers openly for better learning and to clarify their daily doubts or difficulties.” (P.3)

“Practical exercises and using modern learning methods.” (P.70)

“Practical classes.” (P.83)

“Practical classes.” (P.86)

“Practical classes and contextualization of subjects and going to the courts to check in practice how things work beyond doctrine [sic].” (P.86)

“Students could learn more when studying in a group [...] [Being able to] present to their teacher [their doubts, demonstrating] to have an initiative to read [for] course subjects.” (P.13)

“Debates, an individual study providing the subject.” (P.69)

“Relate theory and practice.” (P.139)

“Group dynamics.” (P.94)

Teacher and Student Representations on Learning

The teaching method instituted by the University is student-centered. This model is designed as a tool that aims to promote greater student involvement in learning. Participants generally report that students study to pass the tests. On the other hand, they agree that part of the students dedicate themselves more when teachers regularly propose tasks to be performed throughout the semester. According to the authors (Mendes, 2004; Matos, Cirino, Brown and Leite, 2013; Zeferino and Passeri, 2007), student participation in learning assessment has a great educational

and formative value. This trend fits in with the philosophy of university being studied and it is patent in the General Evaluation Regulations, which dedicate two of the chapters on “evaluation, tests and examinations”.

However, throughout the study, there is ample evidence of the importance of giving assessment meaning as a process of teaching and learning in law degree courses.

Most students seek to learn in the preparation of tests, exams, which is not good for the student. (P.118)

“As a rule, assessment has taken on the characteristics of a test and/or exam administration process designed to assign grades or numbers, leading to students being viewed as mere numbers, clarifying [sic] [forgetting] its potential in conducting and improving teaching and learning.” (P.11)

“The assessment is not only for assigning grades to students, it also aims to appreciate the purpose and the way the subject perceives the learning.” (P.5)

“The student has a misconception of the meaning of learning... it is important to study first to know and not just study to take a test.” (P.130)

“Always study and not study only for the tests.” (P.39)

“We need to continue to help [sic] [raise awareness] of our students [to the fact that] they should not study just to take the tests and exams, but to know.” (P.20)

These statements lead us to question what accompaniment and guidance can be developed in test-centered teaching. According to Roldão (2010), the role of the teacher as advisor is characteristic of student-centered teaching and translates into the accompaniment that the teacher develops with the student, so that he builds on his knowledge.

Students, when asked about the monitoring model they perceive in their teachers, state that teachers should:

“Pay more attention to students.” (P.59)

“Focus more on teaching and dialogue, that is, create more classroom discussions and be available to respond to student concerns.” (P.120)

“Give students space to express their doubts and not only focus on the essence of the subject matter.” (P.136)

“They could also set aside a day to understand why there is some difficulty in a subject.” (P.86)

However, teachers' challenges in this area focus on:

“Establish student vocational guidance.” (P.23)

“Include in debates those university students who come to this level with linguistic, spelling problems.” (P.3)

“Helping students overcome gaps in secondary and / or primary education.” (P.20)

“Include and/or motivate newcomers in research.” (P.3)

“Include and or motivate students who don’t apply themselves or who do not strive to learn.” (P.21)

“Follow each student and help them overcome potential difficulties in an impartial manner.” (P.20)

The mediation of the teaching-learning process implies that the teacher is the bridge between the learner and their learning. The way it views this process contributes to the learner arriving at their results (Mazula, 2012; Roldão, 1998; Ramos, et. al. 2013; Lopes, 2012). The analysis of the environment in which the teaching-learning process takes place shows, from this angle, to be an extremely relevant element in the teaching-learning process (Stedile, 2009). In this sense, most study participants, students and teachers, agree that the climate in most classes should be favorable to the development of learning.

“In my humble opinion, the teachers [...] they must motivate us but not necessarily with threats to the student” (P.70)

“The climate in the classroom is sometimes unfavorable to the development of learning by students, because there are cases where teachers do not leave the student at ease, to spontaneously express themselves, do not give space to ask questions about the issues concerned.” (P.4)

However, having balance in the teacher's educational action is fundamental for the integral development of the student. Thus, it is advisable to redefine the profile of teachers so that they readily respond in the field of competencies required by the needs of graduates. Competences define the effective framework for intellectual, verbal and practical use and management between teacher and student (Pinto, 2013; Roldão, 2008; Ron, 2010; Perrenoud, 1999a; Perrenoud, 1999b)

Representations of Teachers and Students on Modes of Assessment

Assessing learning means determining the skills to be acquired, so the measurement is done using quantitative and qualitative means (Zeferino & Passeri, 2007). This infers that evaluation is a fundamental condition in the teaching and learning process.

In the law course, as in all other courses at the University, this element is given particular attention. Article 5 of the UCM General Regulations establishes that the assessment covers student achievement throughout and at the end of the academic year. The assessment of individual knowledge is done separately for each of the subjects and/or modules of the syllabus. Students may also be assessed in groups for group work.

The significance of evaluation between teachers and students is based on the need to classify students' level of content learning and define if they can transit to the next year of study. This is done by administering a minimum percentage for the evaluation of an individual and/or group work and two tests and/or exams, with a weight of 60% and 40% over the regular attendance of the discipline, according to the UCM General Regulations. Therefore, the respondents considered this to be the predominant type of assessment, i.e. a summative evaluation.

it is noted, however, that in the Curricular Plan of the UCM law degree course, that evaluation methods should accompany teaching methods, with emphasis on aspects of reasoning, application and integration of knowledge in oral and written expression, in addition to the combination of evaluation criteria that can be used such as written tests, reports of practical classes, laboratory and production practices; project presentations, and final exams. According to De Oliveira and Paixão (2013), the summative evaluation is the type of evaluation to be performed at the end of a course, term or teaching unit and consists of classifying students according to the levels of achievement previously established, usually with a view to their transit from one semester to another.

“The assessments serve to indicate to what extent the student is understanding the subject given by the teacher, otherwise the method of teaching the student should be changed.” (P. 137).

“As a rule, evaluation has taken on characteristics of [a] test and/or exam administration process designed to assign grades or numbers, leading to students being viewed as mere numbers. clarifying [sic] [forgetting] its potential for conducting and improving teaching and learning.” (P.11).

“The evaluation is done only to grade students.” (P.5)

Examining the perception of the approach to evaluation that respondents say is predominant, in contrast to what is stated in the general regulation and curriculum, in the undergraduate courses offered by UCM, particularly those in law, the evaluations are based on tests, examinations and written assignments, with oral evaluations. Teachers and students agreed that in most subjects/ curricular units, tests and/or final exams are the best way to know students' level of knowledge and academic skills. It is evident that the perceptions of students and teachers about the ways of evaluating this course is reduced to that of doing written tests. Teachers and students therefore consider evaluation as only summative. Mendes (2004), criticizes this approach by stating that little is learned about students' learning, because only the correct items in a test are verified and almost no attention is paid to errors, leading to a teacher-centered teaching, which is based on the performance of students according to the pre-set objectives. This thinking helps us answer the previously raised question about student learning in the face of a student-centered method.

It also asks us to what extent teachers and students, who have agreed that teachers often encourage them, actually analyze and/or reflect deeply on their learning.

The lack of teachers' mastery of the subject and its influence on the practice of summative evaluation, the excessive use of the expository method and test-centered teaching, are, therefore, part of the reasons for investing in a formative evaluation approach. According to Mendes (2004), this is the one that best contributes to greater learning, thanks to the continuous monitoring it requires, regardless of the framework and concrete extent of differentiation in the student's teaching-learning process.

There is further justification in redesigning the process to adopt a formative evaluation approach, as students request that evaluations:

“be clear and allow the student room to show what he has learned during class, and not be a way of showing that the student knows nothing and cannot go to the exam.” (P. 48)

“That are easy.” (P.101)

“Law school teachers can be clear in their classes and tests.” (P.13)

Evaluation, as we can see, is not a negative tool in itself (Oliveira & Paixão, 2013; Zeferino & Passeri, 2007). This fact of the teaching process at UCM is so evident that a significant part of the teachers and students agree with it. The information resulting from the evaluations is used by both students and teachers to guide and/or reorient their ways of teaching and learning. Therefore, the concept of teacher support and guidance in the teaching and learning process as an act that informs students about what will be tested, the correction of tests, being open to student grade complaints and assisting those who are struggling during the year, implies a real contribution to student and teacher learning.

Conclusion

Teaching at the Catholic University of Mozambique is student-centered. The data collected in the scope of an in-depth research study, in general, presupposes the teaching processes whose central representation is evidenced by evaluation. The significance of evaluation between teachers and students is based on the need to classify the learning level of the contents by the student body and to define the conditions of curricular transit.

Although both teachers and students have focused on the predominance of summative evaluation in this course, the focus on formative assessment, in a way, enables the development of enabling skills in situations arising from the exercise of professional activity. Therefore, we agree with the authors Lopes e Silva (2012, p.6) when they state that “although evaluations continue to be labeled formative and summative, what determines whether the assessment is

formative or summative is how results are used. Thus, the most radical difference between formative and summative assessment lies in its purpose.”

It is understood that lawyers should be able to perform different functions with technical and human competences. Thus, a commitment between teachers and students is essential, so that they may develop more enriched learning which is more closely corresponds to the paradigm established by the educational institution.

The absence of didactic-pedagogical skills has been shown as one of the main limitations of teachers in and for conducting the teaching-learning process in this course. Recognition of the difficulties teachers demonstrate in supporting newcomer students, as well as the referents used in content intermediation and/or dissemination of subjects, is an illustrative example of the exponential quality and need for teacher education. The didactic-pedagogical competences are, fundamental for the integral development of learning.

The teacher must master the teaching-learning process, as it is through this that he can mediate, design and choose, according to each situation, which resources to use and reorient his pedagogical strategies to achieve the previously defined learning objectives (Mazula, 2012; Roldão, 1998; Ramos, et al. 2013; Lopes, 2012).

The challenge that national higher education faces today, particularly in terms of the teaching processes, necessarily involves knowing how look at itself critically and radically. It is becoming increasingly necessary to reorient the competences of law teachers so that they can intervene effectively thereby contributing to a society capable of thinking and exercising greater social justice. Teaching, in this sense, is not a simple act of transmitting knowledge, but also of mental and social construction, allowing the articulation of a process that begins with the precept of research, development of ethical, critical-reflexive autonomy that, in turn, should stimulate the creativity and humility needed to motivate student learning. In return, employing these tools provided by the teacher, the student should deepen his knowledge of the different subjects. Thus would the institutions be creating an enabling environment for resources and relationships that reinforce learning and the achievement of the desired quality.

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